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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

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DUNDAS CENTENARY EXHIBITION

From June 29th to July 6th Dundas is celebrating its Centenary. Looking back to its early days, how picturesque it must have been! From the point of view of costume alone, we can have some idea of the fashions worn at that time and a little later by examining three dresses worn by Miss Helen Lesslie, a resident of Dundas at that time. These are now in the costume collection of the Royal Ontario Museum and have been displayed as a special exhibition in the Costume Gallery in honour of this occasion. Besides the dresses there are the accessories which also belonged to the Lesslie family, among which the most interesting is a set of false curls. These were frequently worn by the young ladies of the period to supplement their own hair, as a rich array of curls was fashionable.

STOWAWAY BUTTERFLIES

White cabbage butterflies, flitting around Ontario and elsewhere in North America in their million every summer, are all descended from stowaway specimens which reached Quebec on a steamship from Europe in 1860. In less than twenty years the unpopular visitors had spread their progeny over the length and breadth of Canada and the United States and wrought havoc among cabbages and allied plants wherever they roamed. Stowaway butterflies from this side of the Atlantic have not become permanent settlers in Europe to return the compliment, as it were. Since 1876 a total of only 157 specimens of the Monarch butterfly, so common in North America and famous for mass migrations of the species southward every autumn, have been reported in Britain. They have created considerable speculation as to their method of crossing the ocean, especially as an occasional one has alighted on ships far out at sea (in one instance 800 miles west of Ireland). But since the possibility of the Monarchs making the crossing under their own power, and which would necessitate a non-stop flight, is deemed incredible, it is commonly conceded that they must have reached Europe as stowaways—probably in the vegetable lockers of steamships. Not the familiar Cabbage and Monarch butterflies, but the brightly hued and massive specimens from the tropics are the ones which fascinate visitors young and old to the Royal Ontario Msueum.

ALGONQUIN GUIDANCE

To walk along the woodland trails of Algonquin Park in vacation time is a delight. To explore that famous playground and wildlife sanctuary with some competent guide to identify the birds, mammals, trees and wild flowers as you go, is a memorable exprience. Professor J. R. Dymond, of the Royal Ontario Museum, and several of his trained naturalists will again be on hand in the Park this summer to explain the fascinating background of nature to visitors. And there is a Museum of Natural History, specializing in the local flora and fauna available for those interested. Hundreds who visited the Lakeland Sanctuary in recent summers have carried away vacation memories enriched with a deeper knowledge of the wonders of wildlife, made possible by this guidance.

COMMENTS IN CLAY

The delight of pinching and twisting clay to make toys, grotesques, or quaint animals has been experienced by many different sorts of people in vastly different ages. "Comments in Clay", a survey of small ceramic sculpture now on exhibition in the Royal Ontario Museum, has been selected to show man's favorite subjects in this plaint medium: his animals from barnyard or imagination; his gods, goddesses, demons and bogeys; scenes from his own world and the people of his own world as portraits or as caricatures. Certain types from different lands can be compared for their surprising similarity of feeling: the Chinese and the Roman dog; the modern Rumanian and the ancient Greek horse. Though the figures actually come from a period of over five thousand years, the time element is unimportant; rather the figures seem timeless.

VESUVIUS IN TORONTO

Mount Vesuvius is on exhibition in Toronto. Not the actual volcano, because transportation difficulties discouraged its removal from the Bay of Naples. It is on view in the shape of a fascinating relief model which permits close inspection of the yawning crater itself. This model came from Italy and is housed in the geological gallery of the Royal Ontario Museum. Study of the model recalls the memorable eruptions of history, occasions when volcanic ash was wafted as far away as Turkey and Tripoli, and when lava streams had a depth from twelve to forty feet and widths in many hundreds of feet. One such stream in the eruption of 1793 was so liquid that it required but six hours for its four mile course from the crater to the sea.

KAMLOOPS TROUT IN ONTARIO

Introduced into Ontario's Lakeland, the famous Kamloops trout of British Columbia appears to have taken kindly to the change of habitat in the eight years or so since its introduction. Reporting to Professor J. R. Dymond of the Royal Ontario Museum—one of the fishery authorities behind the introduction—a young Toronto school teacher told of landing one of the rainbow-hued finnies at Lake Bernard. It weighed seven and three-quarter pounds, was slightly over twenty-five inches long, and had a girth fractionally over sixteen inches. A younger brother of the angler mentioned, reported that a "technicolor" display of the Northern Lights over the same region on a subsequent evening, created a ghostly sort of light by reflection from an unusually moist ground mist. There was enough light to go fishing, and at his fourth cast standing at the mouth of a creek, he hooked a two and three-quarter Kamloops by the Aurora's glow. Reports of other catches of this introduced species will be welcomed at the Museum.

MUSEUM RECEIVES HISTORIC SWORD

The sword which belonged to Major Irving, who commanded the 15th Foot at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham and was Aide-de-Camp to Major- General Wolfe, has been given to the Royal Ontario Museum by Dr. J. B. Tyrrell and is now on exhibit in the Canadiana Gallery.